

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Define More Clearly Procedures by Which a Municipality Assesses Property

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 36 MRSA §708, first ¶, as amended by PL 1973, c. 620, §17, is further amended to read:

The assessors and the chief assessor of a primary assessing area shall ascertain as nearly as may be the nature, amount and value as of the first day of each April of the real estate and personal property subject to be taxed; and shall estimate and record separately the land value, exclusive of buildings, of each parcel of real estate. The assessors and the chief assessor of a primary assessing area may not review the value of a section of the municipality or individual classes of property unless all real and personal property in the municipality is also reviewed at the same time.

Sec. 2. Property Tax Assessment Review Committee

1. Committee established. The Property Tax Assessment Review Committee, referred to in this section as "the committee," is established to review and report on municipal assessment practices.

2. Membership. The committee consists of 9 members. Appointing authorities shall seek to ensure representation of all areas of the State and of large, small and medium-sized municipalities. Members are appointed as follows:

A. Three members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, at least one of whom must be a member of the political party holding the 2nd-highest number of seats in the Senate; and

B. Six members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, at least 2 of whom must be members of the political party holding the 2nd-highest number of seats in the House of Representatives.

3. Chairs. The first-named Senate member and the first-named House member serve as cochairs of the council.

4. Advisors. The State Tax Assessor or the assessor's designee shall serve as an advisor to the committee and shall provide any information requested by the committee. The committee may appoint an advisory group to advise the committee consisting of representatives of municipal and county government, organizations representing municipal and county government and organizations representing taxpayers and other interested persons identified by the committee.

5. Compensation. The members of the committee are entitled to receive the legislative per diem, as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2, and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses related to their attendance at authorized meetings of the committee.

6. Staffing. The Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the committee.

7. Duties. The committee shall:

- A. Review statutory and constitutional requirements relating to the valuation of property and assessment of property taxes;
- B. Determine the various methods for valuation and assessment used by municipalities in the State; and
- C. Make recommendations for improvement in property tax valuation and assessment practices.

8. Report. By December 1, 2007 the committee shall submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation that includes its findings and recommendations. Following receipt of the report, the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation may submit a bill based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.

9. Extension. If the committee requires a limited extension of time to complete its study and make its report, it may apply to the Legislative Council, which may grant an extension.

10. Committee budget. The chairs of the committee, with assistance from the committee staff, shall administer the committee's budget. Within 10 days after its first meeting, the committee shall present a work plan and proposed budget to the Legislative Council for its approval. The committee may not incur expenses that would result in the committee's exceeding its approved budget. Upon request from the committee, the Executive Director of the Legislative Council shall promptly provide the committee chairs and staff with a status report on the committee budget, expenditures incurred and paid and available funds.

SUMMARY

This bill provides that property tax assessors may not review the value of a section of a municipality or individual classes of property unless all real and personal property in the municipality is also reviewed at the same time.

This bill also establishes the Property Tax Assessment Review Committee to review property tax assessment practices and make recommendations to the Second Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.